Europe's Conquest of the Russian Novel: The Pivotal Role of France and Germany

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Abstract

This article sheds a light on the dynamics underlying the European discovery of the 19^{th} century Russian novelists in general and Dostoevsky in particular, differing between the leading and the following literary polysystems. It appears that in its critical aspect, the plural European reception of Dostoevsky, although initiated in Germany, was dominated by the French critic Vogüé, who in the mid-1880s promoted the Russian novel as an antidote against amoral French naturalism. His critiques popularized Dostoevsky in whole Europe, but not in every sense: whereas the writer's philanthropy was admired, a consensus existed that some of his features and works left much to be desired. In line with this critical selectiveness, Dostoevsky's most successful German and French translators, Henckel and Halpérine-Kaminsky, made, important micro-textual and macro-structural shifts: the German translation *Raskolnikow* (1882) presents a softened image of Dostoevsky's satire on the Germans, and the French translations *L'esprit souterrain* (1886) and *Les frères Karamazov* (1888) radically modify the intrigue of the corresponding Russian source texts. It is argued that because these inadequate translations served as source texts for a variety of European second hand translations, the so-called invasion of Europe by the Russian novel can be better understood as Europe's annexation of the Russian novel.

Keyword
World literature, Russian literature, Literary reception, Descriptive Translation Studies, Polysystem theory, Indirect translation, Adaptation, Dostoevsky, Vogüé, Henckel, Halpérine-Kaminsky.

1. *Introduction: the Russian novel's conquest of Europe*

Russian novels are especially well represented in today's canon of world literature. However, during the greater part of the 19^{th} century, if works by Russian novelists were at all discussed by Europe's leading critics, they were considered a poor imitation of Western models. Russian literature of the 1800s was an internal affair of Russia. Turgenev, considered by many to be a Frenchman in Russian disguise, was the only exception to this rule, whereas his literary compatriots followed this rule. This is even true for Dostoevsky, who today might well be among the most read, quoted and influential writers of all time[1].

Although Dostoevsky had lived several years in Western Europe, outside of Russia he was largely ignored during his lifetime. Before his death only one attempt was made to familiarize Europe's readership with him through a book translation: in 1864 in Leipzig, an anonymous German translation was produced of his *Notes from the Dead House*. Symptomatically, it turned out to be a commercial disaster: the lack of success forced the publishing house to sell more than one hundred issues of *Aus dem Todten Hause* as scrap paper (Zabel 1884: 333).

The idea that the pantheon of European literatures could manage perfectly without Dostoevsky quickly changed after his death. Less than a decade afterwards he would be brought worldwide popularity, which is all the more important because his work was there from the outset of Europe's recognition of Russian realist literature as a whole. Through the door that was opened for him Tolstoy, Tchekhov, Andreyev and many other compatriots, some of them already forgotten, would march upon Europe's centre stage. This sudden discovery of Russian literature

[1] According to Unesco's *Index Translationum*, Dostoevsky is the sixteenth most translated writer in the world. See: http://www.unesco.org/xtrans/bsstatexp.aspx?crit1L=5&nTyp=min&topN=50.

was so fierce, that from the very beginning military terms were used to describe it: by the end of the 19^{th} century it had become common place to imagine "the invasion of French literature by the Russians" as their revenge for Napoleon's 1812 siege of Moscow (Hemmings 1950b: 1).

The association of the Russian literary vogue with the Napoleonic war is perchance inspired by the fact that one of the novels that played a crucial role in this breakthrough was *War and Peace*. Its epilogue contains a prolix essay in philosophy of history, in which Tolstoy inquires how historical processes occur. He concludes that knowing the precise cause of wars and revolutions should be considered an impossibility. It is beyond a doubt that this applies *mutatis mutandis* to cultural history as well. Which forces moved the Russian novelists, Dostoevsky in forefront, to invade Germany and France, occupy the readers' minds and initiate a literary revolution in the receiving cultures is not entirely clear. It is, however, possible to outline a number of political, social, literary and all too often neglected translational conditions that have contributed to the Russian novel's conquest of Europe. This will be accomplished in two parts. The first part deals with the literatures which took the lead, namely the German and French polysystems, and the second part with the literatures that jumped on the bandwagon, i.e. virtually all other European polysystems.

2. *The leading literatures*

2.1. *The critics*

Because of the limited diffusion of the Russian language, in order to acquire prestige in Europe, Russian literature obviously first had to be translated. However, translations usually do not bring along much prestige for the translated author. According to Even-Zohar (1990: 47), prestige only comes if the receiving literary polysystem is either young, peripherally positioned or in crisis. The French and German literary polysystems of the 1880s were certainly neither young nor peripheral, but they were most definitely in crisis. Dostoevsky, whose intent was to edify, but whose writing interests revolved around a society rampant with moral chaos, is often said to be one of the most paradoxical novelists

that Russian civilization has produced. As the past century has shown, the diversity and contradictions that characterize his oeuvre make him extremely vulnerable for any attempt of annexation by cultural and ideological movements, such as socialism, Catholicism, Nietzscheanism, existentialism and Buddhism – to name just a few. In that respect he was an ideal candidate to be used as a response to the literary crisis. This task was reserved for the literary critics.

In 1882 in Leipzig, the first German translation of *Crime and Punishment* was published under the title *Raskolnikow*. Although the publisher was Wilhelm Friedrich, it was actually the translator, Wilhelm Henckel, who had put his money at stake. Because he could not find a publishing house eager to bring out his translation, he convinced Friedrich to publish it at his own expense – all possible profits would be split. Henckel not only translated and funded *Raskolnikow*, he also started up a large-scale promotion campaign. As a critic, he published an article in *Das Magazin für die Literatur des In – und Auslandes* in which he stressed Dostoevsky's philanthropic and psychological value. More importantly, he sent more than a hundred copies of his translation to contemporary progressive writers and critics, including Heyse, Grosse, Freytag, Ebers and Brandes – all whom he thought would be capable to attract the German reader to Dostoevsky (see Moe 1981: 110). Rave reviews soon appeared in widely read social-democratic and other journals. Accoding to Hoefert (1974: ix) Henckel's plan to popularise Dostoevsky was fulfilled by the movement of the so-called German naturalists: a new generation of young men of letters who became fed up with the traditional German fine writing that glorified the German empire. They hungered for a new kind of literature, a literature that would pay genuine attention to the social excrescences of Bismarck's internal policy, that in the newly industrialized Germany were becoming more visible each day. Henckel took advantage of their desire for a new literary model by suggesting a humanist version of *Crime and Punishment*, which, in the literary circles of Leipzig, Berlin and Frankfurt, resulted in an increased interest for Dostoevsky in particular and Russian literature overall. Toward the mid-1880s this interest would create a generalized Russian hype thanks to the back-up of a similar, but nonetheless different phenomenon that took place almost concurrently in Paris.

One of the recipients of Henckel's *Raskolnikow* was Emile Zola, who was asked to take the pulse of the French literary market about the possibility of bringing out a French version of *Crime and Punishment*. In the spring of 1884 Zola answered pessimistically: "J'ai trouvé une grande répugnance chez les éditeurs français. (...) Ils disent que les traductions ne se vendent pas en France, ce qui est vrai". [The French publishers have responded to me with repulsion. (...) They say that translations are not sold in France, which is true.] (Loew 1991: 78). Where Zola failed to inspire any enthusiasm for Dostoevsky, others succeeded. Notwithstanding the French repugnance to literature from abroad, in the very same year, 1884, the publishing house Plon released *Le crime et le châtiment*. The unequalled success of this translation was to a large extent the merit of one single critic: the eloquent Viscount Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé, who had taken advantage of his long residence in Russia as a diplomat to familiarize himself with Russian literature.

As he himself alluded, Vogüé (1886a: viii) had two motives to popularize Dostoevsky among the French: one political and one literary. First, on a political level, the position of France vis-à-vis Russia had changed drastically in consequence of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Vogüé suggested consolidating the international alliance between France and Russia, its traditional enemy, by a transfer of cultural goods between the two nations. Second, and more importantly, he supported the translation of *Crime and Punishment* not so much because he admired Dostoevsky, but rather because he despised Zola. Similar to many readers and critics of his age, Vogüé blamed the loss of prestige of French literature, which was perceived as a crisis, on the dogmatic amoral naturalism that held Paris' literary scene in its grasp: "le realism devient odieux dès qu'il cesse d'être charitable" [realism becomes hateful when it stops being charitable] (Vogüé 1886: xxiv). He judged that in order to be guarded from further decline, the French literature needed a fundamental correction, that could be provided by Russian novelists in general and Dostoevsky in particular: they too wrote in a realistic way, but in their best works the reader could always feel a touch of charity. Vogüé (1886: lv) explicitly called upon his compatriots to embrace the author of *Le crime et le châtiment*, who in his eyes was a brilliant psychologist and philanthropist, as a new literary model. His plan worked: in the mid-1880s, literary

circles throughout Paris, especially the generation that previously had gushed about naturalism, raved over the Russians and, as a side-effect, over the messenger too. Vogüé's compilation of essays *Le roman russe* became a worldwide bestseller, which would bring him membership in the Académie française. Near the turn of the century, when chauvinist attacks against his critiques became sharper, Vogüé would reluctantly regret the unrestrained force of the Russian hype he himself had created, but by that time the canonization of Dostoevsky was already irreversible (Hemmings 1950b: 77-81).

2.2. *The translations*

If, in less than a decade's time, Dostoevsky was pulled out of obscurity into the middle of the German and French literary polysystems, it was because some critics presented him as an engagé whose philanthropy could avert the German and French literary crisis. However, this does not mean that all aspects and all works of his oeuvre were highly appreciated. Quite the reverse: the leading German and French critics agreed that the champion of the humiliated and insulted suffered from prolixity, that his style lacked elegance, and that after *Crime and Punishment*, especially in *The Brothers Karamazov*, his art fell into decline. At the same time, hardly anyone seemed genuinely interested in his well-developed sense of humour, his religious-philosophical aspirations or his polyphonic style. Given this quite selective appreciation, it is no surprise to notice that the first wave of German and French Dostoevsky-translations contain spectacular shifts vis-à-vis the corresponding Russian source texts, both on a micro-textual and on a macro-structural level.

Generally speaking, when compared to the French translators of Dostoevsky, the German ones were more concerned about macro-structural adequacy. Nonetheless, some of the German Dostoevsky-translations too were seriously abridged. For instance, in *Erniedrigte und Beleidigte* (1890) several chapters of the original, *The Humiliated and Insulted*, were simply omitted. The fact that translational norm of macro-structural adequacy was not always shared by the whole of the receiving German

community, is demonstrated in a review that followed the publication of *Die Brüder Karamasoff*. The critic in question, Waldmüller, regretted that the translation of such a prolix novel was not abridged, although he admitted that "Der Uebersetzer wäre aber dabei schwerlich im Stande gewesen, es allen recht zu machen" [the translator would not have been able to do it right] (Waldmüller 1885: 568). On a micro-textual level, the first German Dostoevsky-translations were in some respect blatantly targeted toward acceptability, at the cost of pragmatic equivalence. The most striking shifts concern Dostoevsky's satire on the Germans as a nation, of which the most biting traces were removed. For instance the uproarious scene in which the Russian student Raskolnikov eye-witnesses a complaint of a German histrionic brothel-keeper in the police station, loses much of its wit in *Raskolnikow* (1882). On the one hand, this removal was the consequence of the technical difficulties of translating Dostoevsky's satire on the Germans, which to a large extent is based on a sophisticated use of heterolingualism (see Boulogne 2012). On the other, evidence exists that it was also the well-thought out agenda of the translator to erase, or at least soften it: in the preface of his *Raskolnikow*, Henckel apologizes that "der Verfasser die Personen des Romans, welche deutsche Namen tragen, konsequent möglichst lächerlich oder Abscheu erweckend geschildert hat" [the author has depicted the novel's characters bearing German names systematically ridiculous or abhorrent] (Henckel 1882: vii-viii), whereupon he insures the reader that in order to parry the offence he had "manches zu Grelle gemildert und manches ganz fortgelassen" [softened some things and left out others].

For the most productive French translator of Dostoevsky, Ely Halpérine-Kaminsky, macro-structural adequacy was not a concern at all. His most successful translations, *L'esprit souterrain* (1886) and *Les frères Karamazov* (1888), both written in collaboration with the obscure poet Charles Morice, perfectly link up with the classicist tradition of the *belles infidèles*. Both cases are equally spectacular. Whereas *L'esprit souterrain* for a longtime was considered a translation of Dostoevsky's philosophical *Notes from the Underground* (1864), it is actually an amalgam of an abridged version of this work with the pre-Siberian, magical-sentimental story *The Landlady* (1847). These two works, although radically different in style and content, are represented as two parts

of a single novel in *L'esprit souterrain* (1886). Each part is named after the female protagonist of the different source texts: "Lisa" and "Katia". To disguise the fissured nature of their translation, Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice fused the main characters of the respective source texts into one: Ordynov. In order to justify the striking change in his personality – the main character of *The Landlady* is a romantic dreamer, whereas the underground man is a cynic misanthrope – a connecting three pages were added in between the two parts, in which this psychological transformation was briefly explained by the narrator.

As Hemmings (1950a) describes, when compared to the Russian source text, also *Les frères Karamazov* (1888) turns out to be a macrostructurally and highly inadequate translation. Not only was the order of the opening chapters changed and approximately thirty chapters were more or less integrally omitted, but also the original epilogue was extended by six chapters which had originated from the unbridled imagination of the French translators. Because Dostoevsky intended to write a sequel, he had left his *The Brothers Karamazov* with an open ending: Dmitrij is wrongfully convicted for murdering his father and will be sent to Siberia, while the vague plans devised by his brother Alëša to free him from prison are not carried out. In the happy ending of the French adaptation *Les Frères Karamazov* (1888), however, Alëša does find a way to circumvent the miscarriage of justice: disguised as peasants, he and the licentious Grušenka succeed in setting Dmitrij free by corrupting the guards and filling them with liquor. Surprisingly, instead of eloping, Alëša voluntarily takes the place of his brother in the prison. He falls asleep and receives a vision of his mentor, the deceased monk Zosima. When Alëša's identity is discovered, legal proceedings are instituted against him. He defends his position so eloquently that the jury bursts into tears. At the culmination point the girl Liza, who before was a cripple in a wheelchair, walks into the courtroom without any aids. She points at Alëša and screams out: "Il m'a sauvée!" [He has saved me!] (*Les frères Karamazov* 1888: 295). With loud applause, her miraculous healing is attributed to Alëša, who is acquitted and takes Liza home as his fiancée. The only thing left to the reader's imagination, is that they lived happily ever after.

In Germany and in France the micro-textual and macro-structural shifts that marked the translations *Raskolnikow* (1882), *L'esprit souterain* (1886) and *Les frères Karamazov* (1888) escaped notice. One exception was André Gide, who had read not only French translations of Dostoevsky, but German translations as well (Rayfield 2000: 340). In a 1911 article in *Le Figaro,* he accused Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice of mutilating the Russian author. In the early 1920s this appreciation reappeared in Gide's widely-read collection *Dostoïevski* and Halpérine-Kaminsky then decided to make his defence. He added extensive prefaces to reprints of his translations *L'esprit souterrain* and *Les frères Karamazov*, in which he explained the reasons underlying his translation strategy. The quintessence of his reasoning is that the French readership of the 1880s was not yet ripe for an unpolished Dostoevsky, that in order to give him a fair chance in the French book market it was *necessary* to soften the culture clash. To enforce his arguments, he underscores that Vogüé had warned the French translators for the risks of "une transposition trop servile" [an all too servile translation] (Halpérine-Kaminsky 1929: 9). Halpérine-Kaminsky convincingly argues that if this warning had been neglected, this would have meant "éloigner à plaisir et pour de longues années les lecteurs français des *Frères Karamazov*" [creating a distance between the French readers and *The Brothers Karamazov* that would last for many years] (Halpérine-Kaminsky 1932: 13). What is more, he assures that if Dostoevsky has become a widely-admired writer in France, it is precisely because of his adaptations, which had become "des oeuvres classiques" [classical works] in France (Halpérine-Kaminsky 1929: xxvii). It must be said that *L'esprit souterrain* (1886) and *Les frères Karamazov* (1888) were indeed highly successful French literary products, as from their first edition until the Second World War Halpérine-Kaminsky's translations were reprinted almost on a yearly basis.

As a consequence of the translational creativity of Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice, swarms of readers became acquainted with Dostoevsky's self-willed fiction, but only in a strongly abridged and simplified form. It goes without saying this had an enormous impact on their interpretation of the works in question. For instance Nietzsche discovered Dostoevsky via *L'esprit souterrain* (1886), which he found in 1887 in a bookshop

in Nice. His correspondence testifies that he was greatly impressed by Dostoevsky's presumed "höchste psychologische Mikroscopie" [best psychological microscopy] (Colli & Montinari 1984: 75). At the same time, he did not understand at all that Dostoevsky had written *Notes from the Underground*, as Frank (1997: 332-343) explains, as a parody of the utilitarian novel *What to do?* by his contemporary Chernyshevsky. As such, the widely discussed influence of Dostoevsky on Nietzsche was in fact the influence of the French translators.

3. *The following literatures*

3.1. *The critics*

Whereas the German and French literary polysystems needed a crisis to welcome Russian literature in general and Dostoevsky in particular, such was not the case with other European literatures: the mere fact that the author of *Crime and Punishment* was embraced by leading French and German critics, whose authority surpassed the borders of their own nations, was reason enough to have him translated, read and discussed – albeit more as a French and German literary phenomenon than as a Russian author. This Gallo-German influence on the reception of Dostoevsky in other European literary polysystems has not yet been the object of a comprehensive work, but it is touched upon in a variety of studies concentrating on different facets of this reception. Among these studies, the research of Edgerton occupies a central position.

A true revelation was the study by Edgerton wherein he proves that, in sharp contrast to the wide-spread idea of a so-called international Slavic brotherhood, the Western and Southern Slavs "too followed general European literary fashions and turned to the great Russian novelists only after France and Germany had discovered them" (Edgerton 1963: 53-54). For instance, the Polish critics completely silenced Dostoevsky when he was still alive, and Tolstoy would only be discussed after 1885. In the case of the Polish this initial reluctance can easily be explained by the fact the Russians were, after all, occupants of the Polish homeland. However, also the Bulgarian intellectuals, whose program included the study of the Russian language, only paid attention to the Russian

novelists "after they had begun to be translated and discussed in Western Europe". In this respect no fundamental difference existed between Europe's Slavic and non-Slavic peripheral literatures.

The publication history of the first European translations of *Crime and Punishment*, the novel that was central to the Russian hype, speaks volumes about the instigating role of France and Germany. The release of Henckel's *Raskolnikow* in 1882 marked the beginning of a spate of translations which would gain momentum in 1884, when Paris was enriched with *Le crime et le châtiment*. According to the bibliographic information provided by the writer's widow Dostoevskaja (1906), within less than a decade time after its German discovery translations of *Crime and Punishment* appeared in Swedish (1883), Danish (1884), Norwegian (1884), Dutch (1885), English (1886), Polish (1887), Serbian (1888), Hungarian (1889), Finnish (1889), Greek (1889) and Italian (1889). In addition to this, Edgerton (1963: 66) situates the first Croat and Czech versions of *Crime and Punishment* between 1882 and 1884 and the first Ukrainian one in 1887. This picture can be filled up with the aid of library catalogues, which allows one to date the first Portuguese and Spanish translations respectively in 1901 and 1903. The exact date of the first Rumanian, Bulgarian and Baltic translations of Dostoevsky's novel, in their turn, remain blanketed in obscurity, but it is not very plausible that they took place before the mid-1880s.

The above publication history shows that Scandinavian literatures were the first in Europe to tread in Germany's footsteps. This is not surprising, given the importance that Denmark, Sweden and Norway, sharing a common Germanic heritage, attached to the German culture. A prominent role in the popularization of Russian literature in Scandinavia was played by the Danish writer and critic Georg Brandes, who as an exile in Berlin had strongly contributed to the outbreak of the Russian vogue in the naturalist circles. Together with Von Reinhold, who initially operated from Courland, and Zabel, Brandes was among the most influential critics of Russian literature in the Germany of the early 1880s. Interestingly, Vogüé (1886a: iii) himself suggests that the popularity of their critiques had fuelled his desire to breach the German monopoly on Dostoevsky. Once the French Viscount had said his piece, he would quickly overshadow the authority of the German critics. Even

though Brandes would loan some appreciations from the Viscount, his own voice would remain a great influence, especially in Northern countries.

Vogüé was not the first critic in Europe or in his home country to sing the praises of Russian literature, but he was certainly the most successful one, affecting both directly and indirectly the plural European reception of Dostoevsky. His direct influence is found in his essays published in *La revue des deux mondes*, to which a large part of Europe's intellectuals were subscribed, and in the worldwide bestseller *Le roman russe*, which was translated into various languages. In 1887 even a Russian translation was made, which would have a real impact on the Russian image of Dostoevsky (see Rejser 1968). More difficult to assess is the indirect influence of Vogüé: countless are the critics in Europe, more often than not lacking knowledge of the Russian language, who took the French Viscount's judgments on Russian literature indiscriminately on loan. This applies to the Dutch-, Slavic-, Romance- and even English- speaking regions of Europe.

Given the then predominance of the French language in Belgium, it is logical that Dostoevsky's early reception in its Dutch-speaking part was emanating from France rather than from Germany. For instance, as early as 1885 the Flemish critic Segers set the ball rolling with an essay on Dostoevsky that was largely based on the writings by Vogüé. Also in the Netherlands, where developments in the German literature were closely observed, the popularization of the Russian author was led by Gallophile critics: Busken Huet, who reported directly from Paris, and Ten Brink, who was highly indebted to *Le roman russe* (see Boulogne 2011: 385-397). Another illustration of the French impact on the early Dutch reception of Dostoevsky is the fact that the journal *De Amsterdammer*, which played a non-negligible role in the popularization of Russian novels, published a review of a *French* Dostoevsky-translation, which was once again built upon citations from Vogüé.

As for the Slavic literary polysystems, Edgerton (1963: 66) points out that in the aftermath of the German translation of his writings on Russian novelists, Brandes was given a prominent voice in the Polish, Czech, Croat, Serbian, Rumanian and Bulgarian literary press of the early 1880s. However, from the second half of the 1880s even in the

Slavic countries the major role in the literary debate on the Russian was played by the French Viscount. His *Le roman russe* was brought to the attention of the Polish readers in the very year of its publication in Paris, it "decisively influenced" the Czech national leader Tomáš Masaryk in his attitude toward Russian literature, it played "a similarly influential role" among the Croats and Serbs, and among such neighbours of the Eastern Slavs as the Rumanians and Hungarians, Vogüé's influence was "likewise very great" (Edgerton 1963: 71-74).

According to another study by Edgerton (1976: 55), the Portuguese critic Magalhães Lima appears to have been "the literary general in charge" when the invasion by the Russian novelists of the Iberian Peninsula took place. His writings also bear the deep stamp of *Le roman russe*, which he recommended as soon as 1886 as a guide to realist Russian literature. In addition, other Portuguese influential critics, such as the celebrated writer Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho, were indebted to the Frenchman.

About a year after the introduction of the Russian novel in Portugal, Spain joined the movement. The lead was taken by Countess Emilia Pardo Bazán, who in March 1885 had read *Le crime et le châtiment* and had personally witnessed the Dostoevsky-hype in Paris. The knowledge of Russian literature she gained with the aid of French translations resulted in a series of lectures at the Athenaeum in Madrid, which thereafter was materialized in the bestseller *La revolucion y la novela en Rusia.* The publication of this book in 1887 firmly established the Russian novelists as an object of discussion in the authoritative Spanish literary press. This is all the more important, since Bazáns inspiration was to such an extent based on Vogüé's *Le roman russe* that today it would be classified under the denominator of plagiarism (see Osborne 1954: 274).

In line with the above findings researchers dealing with the Italian reception of Russian literature, as recently as Béghin (2007: 22), point to the great impact of Vogüé. Given the then status of the French language as a lingua franca the Viscount did not even need an interpreter in order to be understood in Northern Italy. However, here another powerful voice was raised, wherein judgments on Dostoevsky did not originate from *Le roman russe*, but from the Russian originals. The voice was that of the man of letters Count Angelo De Gubernatis, who had been

imparted a thorough knowledge of the Russian language and culture by his sister-in-law Elizaveta Bezobrazova (Baselica 2011).

Since the English literary polysystem at the end of the 19th century did not occupy a peripheral position to the same extent as the above mentioned literary polysystems, it is surprising to note that here too the influence of the French Viscount was crucial. Strictly speaking, the English literature was a pioneer in its discovery of Dostoevsky, as already in the year of his death, 1881, a translation of his *Notes from the Dead House* was published under the title *Buried Alive or Ten Years of Penal Servitude in Siberia*. However, the interest aroused by this publication was "not sufficient to call forth other translations" (Muchnic 1939: 8). The English reception of Dostoevsky could only get off the ground after his fame had peaked in Paris. As a direct consequence of the success of *Le crime et le châtiment*, London produced the Dostoevsky-translation *Crime and Punishment* (1886), which was met by the critics with mixed feelings. Interestingly, according to Muchnic (1939: 15), the English readers' acquaintance with the Russian novelist was due to *Le roman russe* much more than to Dostoevsky's English translations. In the English-speaking world, Vogüé's work was read in French on a large scale, but from 1887 it existed also in an English translation. For that matter, it was also present on the English book market in disguise, as in 1890 the study by Bazán was translated into English. It seems that May was not exaggerating when she observed that "this book did more to shape Western attitudes toward Russian literature than any other work" (May 1994: 21).

3.2. *The translations*

Since the image a readership has of a certain author depends on the way in which he is presented by the critics, it is impossible to understand the European images of Dostoevsky without knowledge of *Le roman russe*. However, as Even-Zohar (1990: 45) has pointed out, the translations of an author's work might be of even more importance for his crystallization in the receiving community. In that sense, it is important to note that the literatures that turned to the Russian nove-

lists after they had triumphed in Germany and France, consumed the German and French texts, including such inadequate translations as *Raskolnikow* (1882) and *Les frères Karamazov* (1888). For instance, a survey of the 1920s has shown that a considerable part of the then intellectual elite of Flanders and the Netherlands discovered Dostoevsky in German and/or French translation rather than in Dutch translation (see Boulogne 2011), and according to Baselica, in Italy "inizialmente i romanzi russi vengono letti più in francese che in italiano" [initially the Russian novelists were read more often in French than in Italian] (Baselica 2011). At the same time the following literatures did not hesitate to complete their own repertoires with translations of Russian literature of their own production, which often kept circulating long after the French and German texts were forgotten. Notwithstanding the weight of their contribution to Dostoevsky's European popularization, these translations have not been systematically studied. Certainly, it is not difficult to find studies expressing passing comments on their quality. For instance, Morales mentions "algunas pésimas traducciones comerciales, que presentan a un Dostoyevski desfigurado y mutilado" [some very bad commercial translations which present a disfigured and mutilated Dostoevsky] (1992: 450). The most striking translational shifts, the reasons underlying the adopted translational strategies and their consequences remain a blind spot.

In *Descriptive Translation Studies and beyond* (Toury 1995) it is advised to first lay bare the preliminary translational norms governing translation policy with regard to (in)directness. In practice this can be problematic, for the information on the title page might be false. As Ringmar (2007: 7) warns, also the information in catalogues and bibliographies, mostly based on paratexts and title-pages, is not always reliable. Therefore, paratextual information should always be interpreted with care. Besides, it is not exceptional that the translation's general macro-structural features completely conceal its translational status: the title-page may not mention the source language, the translator or the source text, and the original title may be translated so inadequately that is it beyond recognition. In that case the translation's genealogy can be discerned through the help of claims on the translation rights, if they can be tracked. It occurs, however, that a translation was made from

another text than the corresponding claim said[2]. Therefore the most secure way to uncover the (in)directness of a target text is its comparison with the corresponding source text and with potential mediating translations: if the target text and a potential mediating text display similar shifts vis-à-vis the source text, then it can be supposed, by way of a working hypothesis, that they are genealogically related. The application of this methodology to a selection of early Dostoevsky-translations suggests the existence of highly interesting patterns which shed a new light on the European reception of Russian literature.

Although the early Slavic Dostoevsky-translations were produced under the influence of the French and German successes, these texts, such as the Polish translation *Zbrodnia i kara* (1902, figure 1), were translated directly from the Russian. If the bibliographical data collected by Dostoevskaja (1906: 221, 242) are correct – which is plausible, since publishing houses would rather disguise a second hand translation as a direct one than vice versa – Henckel's *Raskolnikow* (1882) was used as a source text for the first Norwegian and Swedish translations of *Crime and Punishment*, respectively *Raskolnikow* (1883) and *Raskolnikow* (1884). In addition, descriptive research has shown that the Dutch translation *Schuld en boete* (1885) was also predominantly established from the German, although it also bears a superficial stamp of *Le crime et le châtiment* (1884) (see Boulogne 2011: 418-420). The latter French translation, in its turn, served as a source text for at least five different target texts. Notably the second Dutch translation and the first Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and, more surprisingly, English translations of *Crime and Punishment* reveal similar deviations vis-à-vis Dostoevsky's original, which can only be explained by a genealogical relationship. For instance, the very first sentence of the Russian original has been translated inadequately by the original French translator, immediately mentioning that Raskolnikov's house was situated into a flat with *five* stores. As figure 2 illustrates, this five-storied flat also comes

[2] This was for instance the case of the Dutch Dostoevsky-translation *Uit Siberië* (1891): although the translational rights were claimed for a German translation of *Notes from the Dead House*, a great part of the Dutch target text originates from the French translation *Souvenirs de la maison des morts* (1886). See Boulogne (2011: 422-424).


Zbrodnia i Kara

Powieść w 2 tomach

T. M. Dostojewskiego

z upoważnienia spadkobierców autora przełożył

Bolesław Londyński.

TOM I.

ŁÓDŹ — WARSZAWA

Zachodnia 37

1902.

Figure 1. The title-page of a direct Polish translation of *Crime and Punishment.*

up in *Crime and Punishment* (1886), *Il delitto e il castigo* (1889), *Een misdaad* (1895), *Crime e castigo* (1901) and *Crimen y castigo* (1903).

Given the fact that the German translation *Raskolnikow* (1882) provides the reader with a softened version of Dostoevsky's satire on the Germans, its use as a mediating translation brought along a distorted image of the author's poetics in the Northern countries, including Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and Flanders. Neither is *Le crime et le châtiment* (1884), on the other hand, a highly adequate translation. Therefore, its success as a mediating translation might have also warped Dostoevsky's European images to some extent. What is more, the previously discussed adaptations by Halpérine-Kaminsky and Morice, which present radically different plots than the corresponding source texts, found their way to the European translation markets. In Amsterdam, as early as 1887, an anonymous translation of *L'esprit souterrain* (1886) was brought out under the title *De onderaardsche geest* (1887). In the next century, this French translational amalgam also served as a source text for at least three more European translations: the Spanish text *El espiritu subterraneo* (n.d., see figure 3) and the Italian texts *Lo spirito sotterraneo* (1930) and *Lo spirito sotterraneo* (1933). In addition to this, in Brazil a Portuguese translation from the French by Rosário Fusco was brought out by Epasa under the title *O espírito*

subterrâneo (n.d.). Finally, even the work that today is generally considered one of the greatest masterpieces of the Russian literature, *The Brothers Karamazov*, was translated into various European languages from a French *belle infidèle*: not Dostoevsky's original open ending, but the adapted saccharine epilogue of *Les frères Karamazov* (1888) constitutes the final of at least five translations: the Dutch translations *De gebroeders Karamazow* (1913) and *De gebroeders Karamazow* (n.d.) (see Boulogne 2009), the Italian translations *Il parricidio* (1892) and *I fratelli Karamazoff* (1929), and the Spanish translation *Los hermanos Karamazof* (n.d.). The Portuguese *Os irmãos Karamazoff* (1937) contains a strongly shortened epilogue, but also this translation is based on Halpérine-Kaminsky's and Morice's text. There is, however, one important difference between the French translation and the translations in other languages: the former manifested itself as an adaptation, whilst the latter texts as a rule were presented to the readership without notice about their far-reaching macro-structural inadequacy.

Here above, indirectness has been shown to be a translational norm in the majority of the non-Slavic literary polysystems that followed the German and French vogue of the Russian novel. The question remains, why was Dostoevsky systematically translated from German and/or French texts, especially if some of them were highly inadequate? Surely, the main reason was not that the literatures in question lacked translators who were able to translate directly from the Russian: if such a demand really had existed, competent translators would have been found or trained in less than a decade's time – although it is subjective, one may maintain that if such trainings did not exist, it was because the market, tolerating second hand translations, could manage without them. It seems, rather, that the following literatures were not that interested in Dostoevsky as a *Russian* writer, but rather in reproducing his success as a *German* and/or *French* literary product. Not the Russian originals, but the Germanized and Gallicized versions had been fiercely admired and sold in Frankfurt, Leipzig, Berlin and Paris. Since these translations were already filtered, polished and approved for the Western markets, they could safely be taken as source texts. For instance, the Portuguese critic Magalhães Lima explicitly recommended Portuguese translators to use French translations as intermediaries (Edgerton

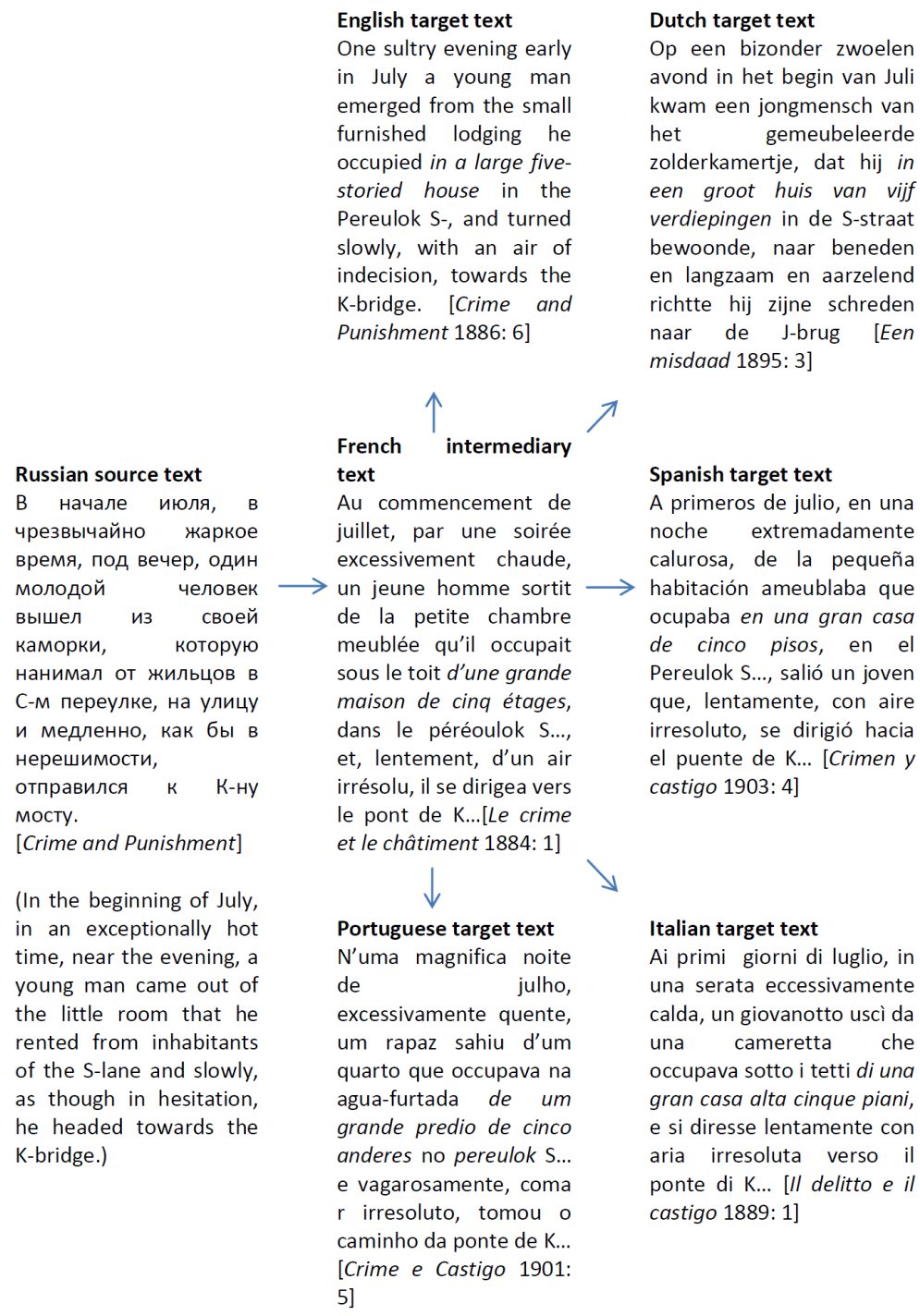

Figure 2. The mediating role of *Le crime et le châtiment* (1886).

Figure 3. The jacket flap of a Spanish second-hand adaptation of *The Landlady* and *Notes from the Underground*.

1976: 54). This piece of advice was eagerly taken into practice, and not only in the first stage of the Russian literary influx – as also the Portuguese translation *Crime e castigo* (1946) was made from the French *Le crime et le châtiment* (1884). Clearly, Europe's discovery of the Russian novel did not go hand in hand with a concern about translational adequacy.

4. *Conclusion: Europe's conquest of the Russian novel*

It is tempting to believe that the Russian novel is canonized worldwide because of its intrinsic literary qualities, but the example of Dostoevsky suggests that this might be only a part of the explanation. Not until Europe's dominant literatures were struck by a crisis in the 1880s was considerable attention paid to Dostoevsky outside of Russia. However, in the first stage, he was only found interesting as far as he could be used as an innovating literary model to defuse the literary crisis. With this explicit aim the dominant critic Vogüé presented the author of *Crime and Punishment* as, to use the words of May: "a paragon of decency and truthfulness with a moral edge" (May 1994: 21). At the same

time, a steadfast consensus existed that some ripe works and some features of Dostoevsky's oeuvre left much to be desired. The paratexts by Henckel (1882) and Halpérine-Kaminsky (1929, 1930) indicate that this critical selectiveness encouraged the German and French translators to introduce important macro-structural and micro-textual shifts to their translations, eradicating the disturbing elements. As such, the German and French critics and translators collectively contributed to the construction of Dostoevsky as the gloomy champion of the humiliated and insulted.

Because of his dazzling literary and commercial success in the centrally-positioned German and the French literary polysystems, in the last decades of the 19^{th} century Dostoevsky was spotted by Europe's other literatures too. However, it would be wrong to think that he was equally celebrated everywhere. For instance, in the Dutch literary polysystem, his prestige would be quite limited before the Great War (see Boulogne 2011: 385-397), and in England "he was not widely read (...) until after the publication of *The Brothers Karamazov*" in 1912 (Muchnic 1939: 9). In line with his varying prestige, he was not given the same role in the leading literatures as in the following literatures, whose main drive underlying the introduction of his works was, after all, inter-systemic imitation. In Europe's peripheral literatures Dostoevsky initially did not perform an innovating function, but rather a conservative one: he was used to validate the long-existing dominance of German and French literary models. This explains why the innovating forces of these peripheral literatures, as for instance the Dutch Movement of 1880, were not always eager to actively contribute to his fame.

As a consequence of the fact that Dostoevsky attracted Europe's following literatures in the first place as a successful German and French literary product, the German and French translations and critics who had popularized him in the leading literatures played a major role in his plural European reception: Vogüe was an uncontested authority in the whole of Europe, and Dostoevsky was systematically translated indirectly from the French and/or the German into a variety of languages. A secondary effect of this subordination was that some following literatures were, at least in the first stage, trapped in a vicious circle: their critics, lacking knowledge of Russian, relied on Vogüé's judgments and

on the existing translations, and their translators, not knowing Russian either, relied on French and/or German translations. Given the fact that the most successful German and French mediating texts, notably *Raskolnikow* (1882), *Le crime et le châtiment* (1884), *L'esprit souterrain* (1886) and *Les frères Karamazov* (1888), were more or less targeted toward acceptability, the following literatures which translated from these texts were in a way cut off from the *Russian* Dostoevsky. Undoubtedly this is why some of his most fundamental aspects, such as his philosophical aspirations, his politically-incorrect satire and his polyphonic writing style, for a long time remained in the shadow of his presumed philanthropy and psychological insights.

Given the specific agenda of Vogüé and the spectacular shifts in the French translations that are to be held responsible for Dostoevsky's European discovery, it no longer seems appropriate to imagine the French hype of the Russian novel of the 1880s as the revenge of the Russian for the Napoleonic invasion. The metaphor should rather be reversed: this hype is better represented as the revenge of the Frenchman for Waterloo, as the above findings suggest that the early European reception of the Russian novel largely comes down to its French annexation. For that matter, two concluding notes are essential. First, also the reception of Dostoevsky in North and South America is, albeit to some extent, concerned with this annexation, for several translations and critical texts produced in France, England, Spain and Portugal were translated, published, read and/or discussed over the ocean. Examples are *Le roman russe*, Bazán's book and the English second hand translation *Crime and Punishment*. Second, it remains unclear if the other Russian novelists that were brought to Europe (and introduced in the canon of World Literature) in the same wave as Dostoevsky underwent a similar large-scale manipulation. This should be clarified in descriptive translation studies yet to come.

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[3] Only the translations mentioned in this article that were the object of genealogical or other descriptive research are listed here.

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